

Equalizing the Field: How Gender Shapes Electronic Music Production Career Trajectories in
the Netherlands

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Abstract

Despite a noticeable increase in female DJs and rising calls for inclusivity within the Dutch niche electronic music scene, the number of women engaging in electronic music production still seems to lag behind. Therefore, this research explores the obstacles hindering women from music production within the Dutch niche electronic music scene. It seeks to answer the following question: ‘To what extent do female DJs and producers in the Dutch niche electronic music scene experience negative gender dynamics in their step towards music producing?’. The study draws on existing academic literature by engaging with works on both general gender theories and those specifically applied to the (electronic) music industry. Additionally, it makes use of works on genre categories and conventions in order to get a clear image of the underground electronic music scene.

Besides, this study analyses 15 semi-structured interviews with female DJs and producers active in the Dutch electronic underground scene. From this analysis a paradox follows. Despite the scene’s image of being very diverse and inclusive, these values are not always reflected in practice. It is shown that female artists still face negative gender dynamics. Insecurities, feelings of inexperience and a steep learning curve all hold women back in their step towards music production or publicly sharing their creations. Gendered experiences like sexist remarks or technical underestimation also play a big role in this. Importantly, the analysis shows a pattern of many negative gender dynamics experienced by the artists relate to the prejudice or stereotype that women are less technically inclined than men. The fact that female artists are still underrepresented in niche electronic music, has resulted in programmers and label owners applying a booking strategy that focuses on inclusivity. The analysis reveals that while gender-inclusive booking strategies are intended to promote diversity and help increase opportunities for women, they simultaneously intensify feelings of imposter syndrome and stereotype threat among female artists, creating a double-edged sword effect. The implications of these findings extend beyond the niche electronic music scene, offering valuable insights for (electronic) music industry professionals, policy makers in the creative field and gender scholars working on music and the creative field.

KEYWORDS: Electronic Dance Music, Music Production, DJ, Gender Studies, Inequality

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1. Introduction

As a programmer of electronic music, I have seen plenty of artist riders. Tech riders are usually not that special; you will read what type of gear the artist needs or brings, as well as some information about a soundcheck. More interesting and infamous are the hospitality riders, known for their crazy demands like blue M&M's. Even though I have never encountered something like this, I have seen plenty of demands for special liquor or cigarette brands, phone chargers, or drugs. In the last few years, a new type of rider has entered the underground electronic music scene: the inclusion rider, which requires a certain level of diversity in the lineup. This can, for example, be in terms of gender, race, and sexuality.

As more and more female and nonbinary people have found their way to the decks, it is not surprising that this rider is now gaining traction. People from these marginalized groups are logically more concerned about this topic. A study from *female:pressure* (2024) showed that from 2012 to 2023 the number of female acts performing on electronic music festivals worldwide grew every year, which resulted in an increase from 9.2% to 30% in 9 years. For non-binary artists, this was an increase from 0.4% in 2017 to 3.3% in 2023. The steady rise of female and non-binary electronic acts (DJs or live sets) shows that the position of female and non-binary performers has improved over the years. However, men are still numerically and symbolically overrepresented.

Both Koren (2021) and Gadir (2016) already noticed that this shift is especially happening in the underground or niche side of the electronic music scene. This research also focuses on underground or niche electronic dance music and not on mainstream EDM. To describe this category of music, I will use the terms underground and niche electronic dance music (niche-edm) interchangeably. The distinction between EDM and niche-edm is an important distinction to make since a different social ethos exists in the two scenes. Contrary to EDM, in the niche electronic music scene, the line between producers and consumers is not so clear, and members of this scene are considered to be politically more progressive. This manifests itself, for example, in club and festival goers being critical of non-inclusive line-ups (Koren, 2021).

Even though there is this progressive image and line-ups are becoming more and more equal in the niche electronic music scene, this progressiveness is not really seen when looking at the gender balance on the producer side. DJing and electronic music production often go hand in hand in the electronic music scene (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013), but scarce evidence suggests that the gender gap seems to be more present when it comes to producers than to

DJs. Because the production of electronic music usually takes place out of sight of the public, there are fewer statistics on gender distribution. However, when looking at the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End Chart of 2022, only 3.4% of the 232 producers were female (Smith et al., 2023). And even though this study focuses on commercial music, it also seems to be a phenomenon that takes place in the electronic music scene. This contradiction makes it an interesting topic to research, and it raises the question whether there is something that holds women back from starting with the production of electronic music. If there is, what is it, and why is it holding them back?

To investigate this the central question in this master thesis will be: To what extent do female DJs and producers in the Dutch niche electronic music scene experience negative gender dynamics in their step towards music producing? In order to make answering this research question more organized I have decided to come up with three sub questions, being 1) How do the careers of female niche electronic music DJs and producers develop?, 2) What are factors that hold female niche electronic music DJs and producers back from producing? and 3) How does their career path relate to the gender imbalances existing in the electronic music scene?

Over the last thirty years that electronic dance music has been scientifically studied, Farrugia (2004, 2012) and Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) were the first to look thoroughly into the topic of gender in this field. It is thus a relatively young research topic. Except for a few writers like Koren (2021), not many researchers have made the distinction between niche electronic dance music and EDM when also studying gender in this context. Instead of looking at the production side, the research on gender in electronic music has mostly focused on analyzing lineups or the making of them, and thus on performing artists or DJs (Gadir, 2017; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Koren, 2021). The way in which people experience gender dynamics is of great importance when studying this field. Therefore, taking a qualitative approach is most suitable to find an answer to my research question. I conducted fifteen semi-structured interviews with female artists (DJs and producers) who are active in the Dutch underground electronic music scene. A qualitative approach, especially in the form of semi-structured interviews, allows us to gain insight and understanding into the thoughts and experiences of these artists.

In my research I decided to focus on female artists, however there are obviously also people who do not identify with being male or female. Many existing research on gender and music does not include gender non-conforming people, rather it focuses on one side of the gender binary (e.g. Berkers & Schaap, 2018; Gadir, 2016; Scharff, 2022; Hopkins & Berkers,

2019), which leaves this group often out of research. Because they are often left out of studies on gender and music, I initially wanted to include non-binary artists in my research. However, due to the size of this research it became too complex to distinguish between women and non-binary people while also distinguishing between producers and DJs. The categories would then consist of too little people and focus too much on one's individual experiences. Another option, putting women and nonbinary people into one category of 'non-men', would be too generalizing and it would neglect that nonbinary people may experience completely different gender dynamics than women. The angle of the study would then have to include queerness instead of solely focusing on gender dynamics. Again, this would not be doable in the size of this research.

Based on existing literature, it can be expected that female artists do experience gender dynamics. These may come in different forms; when someone is just starting their music career, this can, for example, be focused more on gaining access to the right sources of knowledge, while when they are more experienced, they might focus more on networking with label owners or promoters. It can also be expected that these gender-related dynamics play a role in the process of artists taking a step towards music production. Initially, I assumed that these dynamics were mostly negative, but as this research will show, this was not always the case.

The organization of this thesis will proceed as follows. In the next chapter I will sketch a theoretical framework, where I start off with describing the differences between EDM and niche-edm. I do this amongst others through the use of ideas on genre conventions (Fabbri, 1982; Frith, 1996) genre types (Lena & Peterson, 2008) and fields of production (Bourdieu, 1985). In the second part of the theoretical framework, I discuss existing gender inequalities within the cultural and creative industries. Social role theory (Eagly, 1987) and Miller's (2016) idea of the ideal-typical artist play a big role here. In the last part of the theoretical framework I discuss gender dynamics in the (electronic) music, mostly based on works by Farrugia (2004) and Berkers and Schaap (2018). In the next chapter I discuss my methodology, zooming in on decisions I made in regards to the sample, data collection, operationalization, data analysis and the validity, reliability and ethics. In the fourth chapter I discuss the findings that followed from my data collection and analysis. This part starts with a description of values that interviewees assign to underground-edm. Next, it discusses how they currently experience the niche-edm scene in regards to the gender balance. After this, I describe what the career paths of the respondents have looked like and how they have experienced it so far. Then we dive into the gender dynamics they face as a female producer

and/or DJ. The last section of this chapter discusses inclusive booking practices and the consequences this has on female artists, that turn out to not only be positive. The fifth and last chapter is the conclusion in which I summarize my main findings, discuss its implications, reflect on the limitations of this study and do recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework I start off by explaining the difference between mainstream EDM and niche- or underground-edm. With the help of Fabbri's (1982) and Frith's (1996) genre conventions, I classify EDM as an industry-based genre and niche-edm as a scene-based one within Lena and Peterson's (2008) classification model of genres types. This overlaps with Bourdieu's (1985) idea of the field of restricted and that of large-scale production. In the next part I discuss the paradox of gender inequalities (Conor et al., 2015) within the cultural and creative industries. I do this amongst others by making use of social role theory (Eagly, 1987), Miller's (2016) idea of the ideal-typical artist, vertical and horizontal gender segregation (Krijnen & van Bauwel, 2015). In the third and last part of this theory chapter I describe what has already found from previous research on gender dynamics and the production of (electronic) music. I elaborate on four main obstacles women face within the field of music production, being 1) gendered technology, 2) inaccessibility of social networks, 3) time and money investments and 4) the absence of female role models. I do this mostly based on the works of Farrugia (2004) and Berkers and Schaap (2018).

2.1 Mainstream vs. Underground Electronic Music

Before we dive deeper into the topic of production and gender, it is important to first get an idea of the environment that I am talking about. Electronic music is an umbrella term for a lot of different subgenres. These genres are strongly computer-based, which is what connects them. The music was originally made with instruments like synthesizers, drum computers, and sequencers (Ortmann, 2007), however nowadays, a lot of music is produced with the use of music production software, like Ableton or FL Studio. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, electronic dance music flew over from cities in the United States like Chicago and New York and manifested itself in the Netherlands. Through Amsterdam clubs like the iT and RoXY, electronic music, at that time mostly house, quickly gained popularity in the Netherlands (Koren, 2021).

Within electronic music, there are two important roles, the DJ and the producer. The two are closely related, and many producers are also active as DJs. DJing involves playing existing songs and mixing them together, the tracks being played are finished products. The tracks are usually not made by the DJ self, but by a producer. Producers are thus the ones who create music, they do not necessarily have to perform; they can also decide to stay in the comfort of their home or studio (Ortmann, 2007). In order to share their music with the world,

they can approach labels to release their music or upload it themselves on online platforms like Bandcamp and Soundcloud. Another way in which a producer can present their music is by doing a live set, where the artist performs their own tracks generated live from their equipment (e.g. synth, drum computer). In that moment, they are (re)creating their own songs.

Lena and Peterson (2008) have made a distinction between four different types of genres: 1) the avant-garde; 2) the scene-based; 3) the industry-based; and 4) the traditionalist genre. These categories are formed around different traits, like its organizational form, scale, conventions, and technology. Avant-garde genre forms are typically quite small, and their organizational form can be described as a circle; they are leaderless and fractious. They are focused on creating music that is 'new'. Members do not receive financial compensation for participating in genre-related activities. Scene-based genre forms are often local; however, these local scenes may be in communication with similar scenes in other locations. Musicians and other members receive some monetary support but can most of the time not fully support themselves from the music; therefore, they often have a side job. Scene-based genres are characterized by a loose organizational structure with different rings that vary depending on their commitment to the genre ideal. The producers in a scene-based genre are often also the consumers of the products. Here it comes from small collectives, where fans turn into entrepreneurs, which usually comes involves a lot of voluntary labor (Peterson & Bennett, 2004). Industry-based genre forms are market-driven, primarily organized around industrial corporations, and operate on a global level (Lena & Peterson, 2008). Within the industrialized corporate model of a music scene, large firms produce, market, and distribute music. Those firms make products for a mass of individual consumers (Peterson & Bennett, 2004). With the traditionalist genre form, the participant's goal is to preserve a genre's musical legacy and pass it on to the next generation of music enthusiasts. However, it is important to note that a genre is not bound to a certain category; over the course of the years, many genres evolve into and cover different genre categories (Lena & Peterson, 2008).

Within the framework of four different types of genres Lena and Peterson (2004) sketched, they investigated 60 music genres and distributed them into the different categories. They also studied and classified the electronic music genres house and techno and classified them as avant-garde and scene-based. However, it is important to note that their analysis dates back to 2008, which was already 16 years ago at the time of writing this research. As electronic dance music gained popularity worldwide, some genres became more and more subject to commercialism, while others stayed in the underground (Ortmann, 2007). Ortmann already noted it in 2007, but in the period after creating this categorization, an even bigger

popularization and commercialization of electronic dance music took place (Conner & Katz, 2020; Formilan & Stark, 2020). Lena and Peterson (2008) were not wrong by including house and techno; since the emergence of electronic dance music in the 1980s, these were the two main genres, and nowadays they still make up an essential part of it. However, the classification of Lena and Peterson (2008) is (partially) outdated and therefore incomplete. From house and techno, many subgenres emerged, varying from jungle to acid house and from ambient to hardcore (Ortmann, 2007). In the light of this research, it would not be relevant to make a new categorization of all sub- or sub-sub(-sub) genres; besides, it would be nearly impossible with the amount of niches currently existing within electronic music. Rather, I want to make a distinction between two big overarching categories: EDM and niche or underground electronic dance music. EDM often gets confused with underground electronic music, and the term EDM is regularly applied to underground electronic music. This is often a big frustration for members of the underground scene (Mazierska et al., 2021). The commercialization and transformation of EDM into a commodity consumed by the masses have caused the core characteristics of electronic music to be at risk of being assimilated into the dominant culture. It is here that the use of rituals and codes becomes essential in safeguarding the community's foundational values (Formilan & Stark, 2020). Arguing from Benjamin's (1936/2007) notion of the aura of art, members of the niche-edm scene perceive it to be more authentic than EDM. The commercialization and commodification of EDM make it mechanically reproducible, losing its aura and thus its authenticity (Conner & Katz, 2020). According to Formilan and Stark (2020), the boundaries between what is perceived as underground and what is perceived as mainstream may differ over time and per person. There is no clear definition or line between mainstream and underground, but individuals within the scene engage in discussions about its boundaries. This will not only draw a line between the genres but also between individuals engaging in these discussions. In order to engage in these types of discussions, someone needs to have enough knowledge about the genre and its developments. Through this, it is defined who belongs to a certain genre community and who does not. If someone does not have enough knowledge to engage in this type of discussion, they will be considered to be an outsider (Lena & Peterson, 2008). The notion of underground is constantly debated and contested; this can therefore be seen as an example of boundary work. Boundary work refers to a form of social control in which the efforts of individuals and groups in everyday life shape social, symbolic, material, and temporal boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002).

In general the notion of underground is thus used by the members of the scene to oppose itself from the commercial or mainstream EDM, which is more business and mass driven (Formilan & Stark, 2020). Something that can be used to make a clear distinction between these different music categories is Fabbri's (1982) description of genre conventions. In everyday life form and style are often used to describe a genre, however, a music genre is not just defined by this. According to Fabbri (1982), a music genre is defined by a set of musical events guided by a definite arrangement of socially accepted rules, which according to him can be categorized under five categories, being 1) formal and technical rules, 2) semiotic rules, 3) behavioral rules, 4) social and ideological rules, and 5) commercial and juridical rules (Frith, 1996).

The first category are the rules of musical form; this defines the playing conventions a certain genre adheres to. This concerns amongst others, what type of instruments are used or how they are played (Frith, 1996). The subgenre Acid House is, for instance typified by squelching sounds and the basslines of the Roland TB-303 synthesizer. There are no extremely clear differences in musical form when comparing EDM and niche-edm; both are heavily computer-based instead of being made with traditional music instruments (Ortmann, 2007). The other rules identified by Fabbri (1982) seem to play a way bigger role.

The second category, semiotic rules, is about the ways in which meaning is conveyed through music. It is about the expression and emotion conveyed through music, intertextuality (in electronic music often done through sampling), the relationship between maker and audience and the way in which a genre presents itself (Frith, 1996). The interplay of artists and audience already says a lot when comparing EDM and niche-edm. Within EDM DJs can be perceived to be the new rockstars and also collaborate with big pop artists (Formilan & Stark, 2020). They receive enormous fees and rarely play in small clubs anymore, instead they play at big festivals or large music venues (superclubs, as Ortmann (2007) calls them). In these superclubs, artists stand on a podium, positioning themselves above the crowd. This creates a big distance between the artist and spectators. Because artists within the niche-edm scene hold less of a star status and play for smaller crowds, this distance is way smaller. It is also more common that artists are standing on the same level as the crowd.

The third category, behavioral rules, cover performance rituals, both on stage and offstage, for example in interviews or in pictures and videos (Frith, 1996). When looking at on stage performance rituals in EDM, the shows are known to be visually very spectacular. This, while at niche-edm performances lighting is often sparse and the focus is more on the sound (Koren, 2021). The artist is not even always visible for the audience, and is not

expected to hype up the public in a way that EDM DJs are expected to. They do this for example by using a microphone to tell the crowd to put their hands up in the air.

The next category concerns social and ideological rules, these cover the societal perception of artists, regardless of reality. They also refer to the nature of the musical community and its interaction with the rest of the world. The social and ideological rules also concern ethnic or gender-based roles and reflect what the music is meant to stand for as a social force (Frith, 1996). Niche-edm fits Bourdieu's (1985) idea of the field of restricted production, where the symbolic value and development of symbolic capital of users and producers comes first and economic profit comes second. The field of restricted production tends to develop its own quality criteria (Bourdieu, 1985), an example of such a criterion within the niche-edm scene is the inclusiveness or diversity of line-ups. Both Koren (2021) and Gadir (2016) have found that the audiences of the niche-edm are politically more progressive than their EDM counterparts, demanding the programmers and promoters within the scene to create more inclusive lineups. EDM on the other hand fits Bourdieu's (1985) idea of large-scale production; it is scarcely rated on these type of symbolic values, instead its products are short-lived and adhere to the laws of the economic market.

The fifth and last category is about commercial and juridical rules, which refers to the means of production of a music genre. It concerns things like ownership, copyright and financial rewards (Frith, 1996). According to Lena (2012), niche-edm is a smaller industry that consists of small record labels and where less money is involved (Lena, 2012). This is in big contrast with EDM and illustrated well when comparing the biggest electronic music festivals. For niche electronic dance music in the Netherlands, Dekmantel is the leading festival and welcomes over 15.000 visitors each year (Trifec, 2023). However, these 15.000 visitors are nothing in comparison to the leading EDM festival, Mysteryland, which welcomes 130.000 visitors per edition (Bakhuis, 2024), or in comparison with the Belgian festival Tomorrowland that hosts 600.000 visitors each year (Van Der Lee, 2023).

Now that this distinction between EDM and niche-edm is clear, I want to go back to the work of Lena and Peterson (2008). I argue that EDM nowadays should be classified as an industry genre when using their model. This is due to the developments in the genre that took place after their categorization. EDM culture exemplifies how subcultures can become commodified (Conner & Katz, 2020). Where it started as a counterculture in the 1990s, it became more popular with the rise of trance in the late 90s (Ortmann, 2007) and turned into a corporate billion-dollar industry from the 2010s onwards (Conner & Katz, 2020). DJs started to become the central figures of EDM events, granting artists like Armin van Buuren, Tiësto

and Martin Garrix a superstar status (Conner & Katz, 2020; Ortmann, 2007). Their music is played on commercial radio stations, so people who do not necessarily listen to electronic music will also be familiar with their names. EDM thus moved through the different genre categories Lena and Peterson (2008) described, starting as an avant-gardist genre, moving into a scene-based genre, and now mostly being an industry-based one. The underground electronic music genre can now be best described as a scene-based genre, following Lena and Peterson's (2008) classification. It is scene-based in the sense that it consists of many local scenes; creatives can often not support themselves entirely from the music because of the loose organizational form consisting of multiple rings with different levels of dedication.

2.2 Gender in the cultural and creative industries

Careers within the electronic music scene are often gendered; however, this is not something that limits itself to this scene. Rather, it is something that can be perceived within the cultural and creative industries as a whole. A paradox can be perceived here; this field is presented as a very open and diverse one, while at the same time this sector is also coping with gender inequalities (Conor et al., 2015). In the following section, I will present different gender dynamics present in the creative field.

The manifestation of gender in social interactions is heavily influenced by the socialization of gender roles and the responsibility to align with prevailing cultural beliefs. Instead of being biologically determined, gender is determined through social interactions. It is thus not something that we are; it is something that we do (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender can therefore be viewed as a social construct (Schaap & Berkers, 2018). Over time, people have constructed certain appropriate ways of acting within a gendered framework; they serve to reinforce the notion that gender is essential (West & Zimmerman, 1987). With this, stereotypes are created that play a big role in shaping our identity and subjectivity (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). The idea that gender behaviors are regulated by social norms is what we call social role theory (Eagly, 1987). Within this framework, women's competence is often more strictly judged than that of men (Berkers & Schaap, 2018). This can lead to gender inequalities that do not only occur within electronic music but in many parts of and outside of the cultural field.

A possible explanation for gender inequalities in the working field can be found in Acker's work (1990) that describes how workspaces are gendered. They are based on the idea of the ideal-typical worker who often embodies stereotypical masculine characteristics. According to Hall 'stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics,

which are represented as fixed by Nature' (Hall et al., 2013, p. 247). Following from Acker's ideal-typical worker Miller (2016) introduced the ideal-typical artist, that is just like the ideal-typical worker formed around a masculine subject. This image is masculinized through three factors, being 1) the expectations of the creative genius; 2) the gender bias in aesthetic evaluations and 3) the entrepreneurial part of artistic work is often more socially acceptable for men than for women.

To connect with the first factor of the ideal-typical worker; it is expected of the creative genius that they show total commitment to their work, while historically, committing to one thing is something that is solely reserved for men and thus not for women (Miller, 2016).

Artists are continually defending the aesthetic value of their work and typically desire for their works to be seen, heard or read. However, the works of female artists are usually subjected to a more critical assessment than those of male artists, they do thus have to work harder for recognition (Miller, 2016). This aligns with how tokens are evaluated, based on their gender rather than their individual traits. According to Kanter (1977, p. 216) 'a token does not have to work hard to have her presence noticed, but she does have to work hard to have her achievements noticed'. Someone can be considered to be a token when they are members of a numerical minority in a skewed group (Hopkins & Berkers, 2019). Another non-ability trait that contributes to getting attention as a token is appearance. For women this means that they have to deal with male gazes that objectify and sexualize women (Berkers & Schaap, 2018).

The entrepreneurial nature of artistic work makes that networking is an important part of the job in the creative sector (Gadir, 2017). Organizations often rely on people with whom they have worked before or who are recommended by people they know, because work is often project based. As a cultural worker it is thus important to have a good industry network (Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013). The structure of artistic careers also conflicts with domestic and childcare responsibilities that often fall on the shoulders of women. This is due to the project-based work which makes that periods of little to no work and periods of very hard work alternate (Miller, 2016). In the field of electronic music this period of intense work is for example when a producer needs to mix or master their album or for a live artist or DJ during the festival season. Besides this a lot of work in the cultural field is happening in the evenings or at night, and requires travelling or last-minute availability. A consequence of the challenging balance between creative work and private life is the 'revolving door effect.' This refers to the phenomenon where the number of women entering the work field is equal to the

number leaving it (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). According to Miller (2016) these are all things that contribute to the inequality between male and female artists or creative workers.

Something that can also be perceived in the creative field is both horizontal and vertical gender segregation. Vertical gender segregation occurs when one gender, primarily men, dominates the highest-paying and most prestigious positions within the working field (Berkers & Schaap, 2018). Men in general dominate the 'above the line' positions as Conor et al. (2015) call them, the positions that come with most power. While women fulfil the 'below the line' positions, with less power. The concept of the glass ceiling is often used to explain this vertical gender segregation. While it is argued by some that the concept is outdated, it can still be useful for highlighting the invisible structural aspects that sustain inequalities in the workplace (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). It can be understood as hierarchically organized gender inequality, which increases towards the top and cannot be explained by other characteristics of a worker or the profession. The glass ceiling is built on sexist ideas, but it being an invisible issue of power makes it hard to determine what exactly constructs and maintains it (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). Next to vertical segregation, there is also horizontal gender segregation. This refers to the overrepresentation of one gender in a certain type of job (Conor et al., 2015). In music this translates itself in gendered instruments, where for example women in metal are usually vocalists (Berkers & Schaap, 2018) and in alternative rock music the bass players (Clawson, 1999). This is a consequence of tokenism, where stereotypical expectations about what tokens must do subject women to certain role encapsulations (Berkers & Schaap, 2018).

2.3 Gender in the music industry

Building on more general gender theories and works on gender in the creative field, studies specifically performed on gender and music production have shown four clear things about the position of women in the production of music: 1) They are generally underrepresented as producers of music; 2) their representation differs per music genre (harder and non-mainstream genres are considered to be more male), 3) their representation differs per instrument; and 4) they receive less economic and symbolic recognition than their male colleagues (Berkers & Schaap, 2018).

Farrugia (2004) noted already twenty years ago that there was an exponential growth of female DJs, but that this growth was absent when looking at female producers. Even though she noted that changes were underway because of increased collaboration, more comfort with technology, and formal education, this discrepancy is still perceivable in the

electronic music landscape of 2024. She outlined important factors that are holding women back from production work, and these factors still seem relevant today. Below, I will explain how the gendering of technology, time, and financial investments, the inaccessibility of social networks, and the absence of female role models all play a role in this.

Gendered Technology

From a feminist perspective, a lot of research has been done on gender and technology, especially within an educational setting. This showed that the use of technology is clearly shaped by social structures (Armstrong, 2008). Culturally, men are expected to know how to use technology, while women are expected not to know how to use it (Farrugia, 2004). This stereotypical display of technological knowledge contributes to horizontal gender segregation (Conor et al., 2015).

Following this prejudice, it is not surprising that since the emergence of house and techno in the 1980s, electronic music and its technology has been coded as something male (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). This led to the idea that only men can be good producers or DJs, which caused that female and nonbinary people in this field often have to prove themselves (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013).

According to Armstrong (2008), multiple parallels can be found between the domain of music production and the idea of technology as a masculine domain. Both are historically and socially constructed along similar lines with a focus on technical knowledge, expertise and rationality. All things that fit with society's image of masculinity. Farrugia (2004) as well as Armstrong (2008) argue from a binary between the mind and body that is also present when looking at music production. In this binary the mind is something that is usually coded as male, whereas the body is coded as female. Both DJs and producers have to deal with technology. However, where DJs are expected more to make use of technology, producers are expected to invent and innovate with the use of technology (Farrugia, 2004). A DJ is expected to feel the music and crowd and respond accordingly to it, something that can be perceived to be more connected to the body. Whereas music producing is more connected to the mind and thus generally coded as masculine.

Inaccessibility of Social Networks

In many cases it is not per se the technology that women find intimidating, but the environment which the technology is surrounded by. Having to learn about technology within the presence of men is what makes it intimidating (Farrugia, 2004).

As briefly touched upon earlier, women and other minorities often have a harder time networking. Just like with other occupations in the creative sector, knowledge is often shared in informal environments and for non-men it can be difficult to infiltrate in these male dominated networks (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). This is because the informal settings obscure the existence of old boys networks (Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013). The gendered nature of networking is often overlooked, instead it has made place for a postfeminist narrative that grants success to people who put in hard work and are talented (Brook et al., 2019; Gadir, 2017). Since gender is constructed through interaction (West & Zimmerman, 1987), it is important to acknowledge the role of language. Language can be used to affirm authority over the other party, for example through using technicalized talk, as Sargent (2009) calls it. The practice of technicalized talk (using technical-sounding language) includes men through friendly competition, but excludes women by positioning them as outsiders (Sargent, 2009). Inclusion in informal scene networks is crucial in the acknowledgement and allocation of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993), since this form of capital can only be obtained through the recognition and appraisal of their peers in the music scene. It is also this valuation of peers that can help electronic music artists to get further in their career, by invitations to perform at their club night or release on their label (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2016).

Since McRobbie and Garber's (1976/1991) study, the bedroom has played an important role in gender research in media and culture studies. They speak of a 'culture of the bedroom', where girls are often perceived to be passive consumers. Contrary to this bedroom culture, boys are usually outside the house, engaging in street culture and taking a more active stance in the production of culture (Barna, 2022). This results in the exclusion of women from spaces where music is being made, like venues, music studios, and music stores. From Virginia Woolf's (1927/1977) classic concept of 'a room of one's own', it follows that women need a space that is separated from the competitive patriarchal music industry. This separation can be essential for women pursuing musical careers (Barna, 2022).

Much has changed in the decades since the publication of McRobbie and Garber's (1976/1991) study. Digitalization has made bedrooms no longer merely passive spaces; rather, they have become a space for creativity that allows for active engagement and the production of culture (Barna, 2022). Especially within electronic music, one only needs a computer, speakers, or headphones to start producing from the bedroom (Barna, 2022). The rise of online peer-to-peer networks, online tutorials, and a virtual stage have all contributed to lowering the barriers to participation (Chambers, 2021). Since the required information can be found online, the necessity to visit physical places that are dominated by men, like record or

music stores, has diminished. This has made knowledge and the right networks much more accessible to people of all genders. These digital environments have reduced the effects of traditional social hierarchies and gatekeepers on music production and consumption. Digital environments therefore offer new networking possibilities for women (Farrugia, 2004), Think about social media platforms like Instagram or music sharing platforms like Soundcloud. For female artists, it is also perceived as a safer environment, which allows them to experiment (Barna, 2022). However, it is important to note that individuals who start with producing often still need help from others who can provide them with the right knowledge, gear, or, as discussed earlier, recognition (Parsley, 2022).

Time and Financial Investments

To learn about producing electronic music and DJing, a lot of investments need to be made, both financially and time-wise. It is important to note here that women in general start DJing and producing at an older age than men. According to Farrugia and Swiss (2008) women typically start DJing somewhere in their late 20s, just like they join a band at an older age than men in rock music (Clawson, 1999). During adolescence, friendship networks are usually formed based on gender, and just like with rock music, artists are generally self-taught and rely heavily on their social networks (Clawson, 1999). When getting older, post-adolescence, these networks tend to be less reliant on gender, enabling women to have better access to relevant knowledge. However, when getting older, there is usually less leisure time, for example, because of work or family commitments, making it more difficult to invest a lot of time into a new interest (Farrugia, 2004).

In her article Clawson (1999) highlights the assumption that women are drawn more than men to an instrument that is faster to learn and has lower skill requirements. In her research on rock music this was the case for the bass. From this framework Clawson (1999) argues that the bass guitar can be considered to be a first step for women, from which their participation as instrumental musicians can be legitimated. This provides them access to band-based modes of artistic and career development. A parallel can be drawn between the role of the bass in rock music and the role of DJing in electronic music. It does not take a lot of time to get familiar with the basics of DJing. The learning curve for producing electronic music on the other hand is very steep (Farrugia, 2004). Starting with DJing might serve as an initial step into the electronic music scene, helping to acquire the necessary knowledge and contacts to maybe later transition into electronic music production.

However, when already DJing, starting with music production can also get in the way of someone's DJ career. Investing more time in the production of music, will cause there to be less time for digging music, but also for taking part in networking, while this is, as discussed before, of big importance for ones DJ career. Producing and releasing music next to DJing, is however also an effective way to gain more popularity and recognition within the DJ community. People playing your tracks can be seen as a form of success and peers also show respect in this way. Besides, there are fewer producers than there are DJs. DJs who also produce, in general hold a higher status and receive higher fees (Farrugia, 2004).

Both DJing and producing can be an expensive practice, since investments need to be made in gear and records. However, both have become financially more accessible due to technological developments (Chambers, 2021). DJing became more accessible when less expensive DJ equipment has entered the market. Besides, the costs for buying music has lowered; where initially vinyl records had to be bought, music can now be (legally and illegally) downloaded online as digital files (Bloustien, 2016). And where production initially took place by using expensive analogue gear, more affordable digital versions and production software entered the market (Ortmann, 2007). Many DJs and producers say not to do it for the financial gain, but for the love of electronic music (Farrugia, 2004). It is however still good to note that for most artists investments in production and DJ gear are costs that are quite hard to recoup through gigs or releases. The expenses on music often leave little money for buying production equipment. The existing issue of women earning unequal pay compared to men in most occupations, including those related to music, makes the situation even worse (Berkers et al., 2019).

The Absence of Role Models

As stated before, gender behavior is regulated by social norms. Socialization takes place through the world around us, family, peers, education and the media can all be considered important agents in this process. They function as role models in someone's life (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). The importance of role models is something that should not be underestimated. Role models can influence someone's ideas about what they think they can or cannot accomplish. Especially in male-dominated genres, same sex identification can be very strong (Berkers, 2012). The absence of role models can make people draw the conclusion that their gender is 'just' not good at something (Berkers & Schaap, 2018). With men occupying most positions within electronic music, from production to record store employees, the absence of female role models thus maintains the idea that electronic music is

something for men. Leaving women in a position from which it is difficult to identify themselves with artists and to imagine themselves in such a role (Farrugia, 2004).

Role models also play an important role in educational settings. In many specialized music programs, the teaching staff is entirely or predominantly male (Hopkins & Berkers, 2019). Female teachers can not only change the confidence of female students but also impact the way male students look at the abilities of women (Farrugia, 2004). In addition to the absence of female teaching staff, there is also a lack of women participating in specialized educational programs. This could be a possible explanation for the lack of female producers and a vicious circle where not many females register for formal education because there are no other female students. Second, women lack awareness of the existence of these sorts of education, since it is believed to be something male (Hopkins & Berkers, 2019). Another possible explanation for the absence of women in electronic music education could be that for many women, interest in electronic music really takes off when they are in their late 20s. This is often considered to be ‘too late’ to attend formal education about music making, leaving them with fewer resources than men for electronic music production (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). According to Farrugia (2004), another common way of learning about production outside of formal education can be through an apprenticeship with a producer who is more experienced. Due to the scarce presence of female producers, the more experienced producers are often male producers. In this environment, women may also face discrimination since men usually find it easier to establish friendly relationships with other men.

In this literature chapter, I have made a distinction between EDM and niche/underground electronic dance music. I have highlighted the challenges women face in the creative field as a whole, and also how these dynamics impact the music industry, particularly within the realm of electronic dance music. This theoretical background provides a framework for a better understanding of the research question: To what extent do female DJs and producers in the Dutch niche electronic music scene encounter negative gender dynamics as they venture into music production? In the following chapter, I will explain the approach taken in order to answer this question.

3. Methodology

In this third chapter I discuss my methodology. First, I discuss my sample criteria, sampling process and my final sample. Next, the data collection is discussed, which took part through semi-structured interviews. This is followed up by a description of my operationalization and data analysis process. This chapter ends with a discussion of the validity, reliability and ethics of this research.

3.1 Sample

My unit of analysis were female DJs and producers situated in the Netherlands who operate within the niche electronic dance music scene. I considered someone to be part of the niche-edm scene by looking at the type of music they made or played and by looking at what kind of places they performed. I looked for example at whether they played at online community radio stations instead of the more mainstream FM radio stations. Next to this participants of the research had to meet the following requirements to be classified as a DJ: 1) they need to perceive and present themselves to be a DJ, 2) have regular (paid) gigs, at least 4 over the last year, and 3) at least have 3 years of experience. To be classified as a producer they had to 1) perceive and present themselves to be a producer, 2) share their music with the outside world (either through a label or independently) and 3) at least have 3 years of experience.

Even though DJing and music production often go together, it does not logically follow from existing literature that people usually start with DJing and follow that up with producing in a later stadium (or the other way round). Whether or not the transition from DJ to producer is a natural transition is a much-debated topic, according to Farrugia (2004). Therefore I decided to keep the direction of this development more open instead of assuming a direction in which someone's career develops. By interviewing producers and DJ's and asking them about their career path I thus took an inductive approach. Initially I wanted my sample to be consisting of female producers that solely produce, DJs that solely DJ, and people who do both. However, when looking for possible participants it appeared already very quickly that the category that solely produced was difficult to find. Initially I asked about 30 people from my circle that are familiar with the Dutch underground electronic music scene (mostly being people who work in nightlife and/or people who DJ and/or produce themselves) whether they knew female producers that did not DJ next to producing. From this round of inquiry no one followed that fitted all requirements. In the interviewing process I ended every interview by

asking whether they knew other artists that might be interesting for me to interview and whether they knew someone who solely produced, here I thus made use of snowball sampling (Bryman, 2015). However, from this inquiry round there were also no artists who fitted the description. There thus seemed to be a conspicuous absence of producers who do not DJ on the side (this does however go both for male and female artists), which I will discuss in further detail in the results section.

I chose for a sampling method called purposive sampling (Bryman, 2015). I am familiar with the underground electronic music scene in the Netherlands and have good contacts with programmers, DJs and producers through my work as DJ and music programmer at a community radio station in Rotterdam. I did not solely interview people within my social network, but because of my network I did have easier access to others operating within the scene. In the interviewing process I ended every interview by asking whether they knew other artists that might be interesting for me to interview, again making use of a strategy known as snowball sampling (Bryman, 2015).

The sample consisted of artists located in the Netherlands. I decided not to minimize the sample area to for example Rotterdam or the Randstad, because the Netherlands is a relatively small country that does not have extreme cultural differences. Of course there are some cultural differences between cities and rural areas, however within the niche electronic scene those differences are very minimal. Besides, local scenes are usually concentrated in cities. The spaces in which DJs and producers operate, do usually not limit themselves to simply the city where they live, they also get booked by clubs or festivals in other parts of the country. This also goes for the visitors, because the Netherlands is a fairly small and well connected country, visitors also visit clubs or festivals in other cities. I decided not to maximize the sample to Europe, because between countries in Europe, there tend to be bigger differences, for example when it comes to the position of women or the role of religion in society as a whole which might also be reflected in the electronic music scene.

In the end, I interviewed 8 DJs and 7 producers. In total, my sample consisted of 15 participants. To end up with this sample, I had to reach out to 26 DJ's and producers. The artists who did not take part in the research were either too busy at that moment, mentally not feeling good enough, or did not respond to my messages. In the final sample group, the age of the participants varied from 25 to 39 years old, with an average age of 30 years old. Most artists were living in big cities in the Randstad area (in Amsterdam, Rotterdam or Utrecht), only two were living outside of the Randstad. Below is a complete overview of the residents that took part in the research, including their age, gender, cultural background, and whether

they are active as producers and/or DJs. Some are described as ‘DJ (produces too)’, this means that they present themselves to the public as DJs, but that they are producing music in private. For privacy reasons, I changed the names of the participants to pseudonyms.

Table 1. Overview of respondents

Respondent	Age	Gender	Occupation	Cultural background
Anna	25	Female	DJ (produces too)	White
Ashley	35	Female	Producer / DJ	White
Ava	25	Female/nonbinary	DJ (produces too)	Asian
Bianca	32	Female	Producer / DJ	White
Brooke	26	Female	DJ	White
Charlotte	29	Female	DJ	Black
Emily	27	Female	DJ (produces too)	White
Jasmine	39	Female	DJ	White
Kiara	26	Female	DJ (produces too)	Asian
Laura	31	Female	DJ	White/Asian
Leah	35	Female	Producer / DJ	White/Asian
Marissa	34	Female	Producer / DJ	White
Mia	27	Female	Producer / DJ	White
Paige	30	Female	Producer / DJ	White
Yasmin	27	Female	Producer / DJ	White

3.2 Data collection

The data has been collected through semi-structured interviews, a qualitative approach has thus been taken. I decided to go for semi-structured interviews, to learn more about the biography and career of female DJs and producers. In this way I wanted to discover the how and the why these people did or did not become producers and/or DJs. At the same time I also tried to unravel at what moments gender dynamics may have played a role in their career. According to Bryman (2015), semi-structured interviews allow for natural forms of conversations between researchers and interviewees. Because I was interested in the individual journey of the interviewees, one on one interviews were best suitable.

The majority of the interviews took place in person and all interviews were conducted by me. In most cases the interviews took place at the respondents house. Other places where interviews took place where at the office I work or at a café. In a few cases, because of

distance or time constraints, the interviews took place online. The interviews varied from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. At the end this left me with a total of more than 19 hours of data. Except from two respondents, all respondents spoke Dutch, hence the language in which most of the interviews were held was Dutch. In the other two cases the interviews were held in English.

During the last 3 to 5 interviews it became clear that not much new information came into light, the experiences people described were mostly a confirmation of what other interviewees had expressed earlier. The state of theoretical saturation has thus been achieved (Bryman, 2015).

3.3 Operationalization

To operationalize the main research question of this thesis I divided my research question into three sub-questions, allowing for a more detailed definition of indicators. These are the three sub-questions formulated:

- 1) How do the careers of female niche electronic music DJs and producers develop?
- 2) What are the factors that hold female niche electronic music DJs and producers back from producing?
- 3) How does their career path relate to the gender imbalances existing in the electronic music scene?

In order to answer the first question, I initially asked participants how their interest in electronic music started and how they started producing electronic music or DJing. Some respondents already elaborated very much on their experiences, while others kept it very short. For this second group, I also included questions like ‘Did you have people around you doing the same?’ or ‘In what kind of environment did you start producing music?’. To get a better insight into the development of their career, I regularly posed follow-up questions that made them reflect on the progress of their careers. An example of a follow-up question that I regularly used was ‘how is this now?’.

For the second sub-question I wanted to identify what factors hold DJs and producers back in producing music. I was interested in both gendered and non-gendered factors. To not steer participants too much I did however not discuss gender at the beginning of the interviews. In the beginning of the interview with producers I posed questions like ‘Have you encountered any obstacles in your journey to where you are now as a producer and what were those obstacles?’, allowing them to bring up any type of obstacle, whether it was or was not

gender related. To learn more about factors holding DJs back from producing I asked questions like ‘Did you ever think about or try producing music?’ and ‘What held you back in continuing this or showing it to a bigger audience?’. Later in the interview I directly asked for gendered experiences, an example of a question asked at this point of the interview is ‘To what extent do you think your gender influences your experiences as a producer?’

In order to answer the third and last sub-question I had to identify what gendered experiences the artists encountered to see how the career path of female artists relates to the gender imbalances in the niche electronic music scene. I applied the same strategy as for the second question, meaning that I did not mention gender in the beginning in the interview, but left room to bring it up. The question I used as an example in the previous paragraph about obstacles could also be used as an operationalization for the third sub question when looking at how the career, allowing respondents to bring up gender related obstacles when they felt this was of importance to the development of their career. Again, towards the end of the interview I did pose questions directly related to possible gendered experiences or inequalities. An example of a question posed here is ‘Do you have the idea that your gender identity ever (dis)advantaged your career as a producer/DJ?’

The full translation of the research question(s) into interview questions can be found in appendix B (interview guide DJs) and C (interview guide producers). I decided to create two separate interview guides, since DJs and producers might have experienced different things during their careers.

After the first few interviews it became clear that the questions where I mentioned the word ‘underground’ caused some confusion, which hindered the interview. In the initial version of the interview guide, I first asked whether the respondent considered themselves to be part of the electronic underground scene and then what values they believed were important for this scene. Especially the first question caused that the interviewees started a semantic discussion about the meaning of underground and whether it still exists nowadays. As stated in the theoretical framework, what is and what is not considered to be underground differs over time and per person (Formilan & Stark, 2020), therefore I decided to provide a bit more context after the first few interviews. I explained that some people refer to it as niche while others call it underground. I clarified that the focus was not necessarily on the terminology, but on the values they associate with the scene in which they operate. A combination of giving more context to the word underground and leaving out the question about being part of the underground scene helped the respondents to better understand the question, resulting in a smoother flow of the interviews.

3.4 Data analysis

After an interview took place, I started creating a transcript of the interview recording. I did this as soon as possible after an interview, instead of waiting till all interviews had taken place to make sure I remembered body language or any underlying messages. I transcribed the interviews with the use of an A.I. transcription tool, after which I went over it myself to correct mistakes.

I thematically analyzed the gathered data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006). This is a flexible method of analyzing data that can be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. Usually it consists of six different steps, being 1) familiarizing yourself with the data; 2) coding; 3) generating themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After the transcription process I started coding the texts using Atlas.ti. Because I did the interviewing and transcribing myself I was already familiar with the content of the transcriptions. This allowed me to immediately come up with descriptive code names instead of first making use of in vivo codes. I combined an inductive and deductive way of coding, some of the codes were created beforehand coming from the theory. This was for example the case with the code 'being technically underestimated'. However, the majority was inductive and thus stemming from the data. After I finished this initial round of open coding I ended up with 250 codes. The next step was the axial coding phase where I first merged overlapping codes or codes that were only connected to a single quotation or were not relevant anymore. I managed to bring the amount of codes back to 190 codes. The complete list of codes can be found back in Appendix D. With the use of the code list I went back to the interviews and checked whether I had coded all relevant quotes. The next step was to generate themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." I went back and forth between the codes and themes, and finally ended with 17 different themes. Some examples of important themes are 'the urge to compensate and/or prove', 'obstacles DJing and production' and 'gendered experiences'. After finishing the process of data analysis I started writing the results section, where I not only reflected on the data, but also related back to already existing theory, as described in the theoretical framework.

3.5 Validity, Reliability and Ethics

Critically evaluating the quality of research is an important step in conducting academic research. To evaluate research quality, criteria like validity and reliability were established; however, these criteria mostly fit quantitative studies. It is debatable whether we should make use of the same criteria for qualitative research or whether we should use other formulated quality criteria (Bryman, 2015). In the following paragraphs, I will translate these concepts to fit my qualitative research.

Despite the inevitable subjectivity in qualitative research, this research can still be seen as valid and reliable. It is important to consider my subjectivity and position within the electronic music industry. My own experiences as a female, white, queer DJ and worker in the niche electronic music scene influence my views as a researcher. This shaped my perspective on certain topics, but it might have also influenced the interviewees. They might know me as a programmer, which might have held them back from discussing controversial topics. However, my position also held advantages. Interviewees might have felt more comfortable talking to me about gender issues since I am a female DJ as well. Besides, it allowed them to make use of technical jargon, allowing them to go more in-depth on certain topics.

The interviews are replicable with different interviewees, as long as they meet the criteria I explained in the paragraph on my sample. The provision of my interview guides allows other researchers to replicate the interviews (see appendix B and C). However, it is important to acknowledge that interviews can never be done identically since they were held in a semi-structured manner.

It is also important to conduct research in the most ethical way possible. This includes ensuring no harm comes to the interviewees. I protected the interviewees by anonymizing everything, like mentioned before I used did not use the real name of the interviewees. Before the interviews were conducted, participants were asked to read and sign or give vocal consent to an informed consent form, which can be found in appendix A. This was necessary so that the respondents understood the purpose and usage of the interviews, preventing any deception. The informed consent form also informed the interviewees that they had the right to decline to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with.

4. Results

In this fourth chapter I present the findings that followed from the 15 interviews I conducted with female niche-edm producers and DJs. The first section is a description of what values respondents connect to underground electronic dance scene and how these sometimes clash with what they actually perceive in the scene. This is followed up by a discussion of how interviewees see the current state of the niche electronic music scene in the Netherlands, in relation to the gender balance. Besides, it explains the conspicuous absence of the producer who solely produces, as touched upon earlier in my methodology. In the third part of this chapter I discuss what the career paths of the female producers and DJs have looked like so far. It shows that the distinction between DJs and producers is not so clear cut, since many respondents do both (either in or outside the spotlight). In the fourth section I discuss the gendered experiences producers and DJs have, these vary from very obvious sexist comments, to sometimes less obvious behaviors (e.g. being technically underestimated). The fifth and final part of this chapter discusses how inclusive booking practices have seem to become the new norm within the niche electronic music scene. I explain how these inclusive booking practices also have a downside, negatively influencing the self-perception of female artists.

4.1 Underground values

When I asking the interviewees how they would describe the values that fit the electronic underground scene, often-heard words were non-commercial, musically progressive, open-minded, diverse, and inclusive.

Even though multiple interviewees use the word non-commercial when describing the underground electronic music scene, it follows from the interviews that they do not mean completely non-commercial. Most interviewees show that they do care about money, “because everybody needs to make money in capitalism” (Brooke, DJ). This came to light, for example, when talking about the booking processes and fee negotiations. What they usually mean by non-commercial is that the niche-edm scene is to a lesser extent focused on money than the mainstream. This fits Bourdieu’s (1985) description of the field of restricted production, in which there is more value attached to the symbolic value than to the economic one. In line with Lena and Peterson’s (2008) description of a scene-based genre, all interviewees receive some monetary income from DJing or producing, but it is not easy to make a full living when operating within the niche-edm scene. None of the interviewees does so; they always have one or multiple jobs on the side. Sometimes this is within music

production, for example, by making music for commercials. Often, it is within the cultural sector, for example, as a music programmer, record store employee, or marketer. However, some interviewees also have a job outside of this field. When using Fabbri's (1982) and Frith's (1996) articles on genre conventions, the description of niche-edm being less focused on money fits the commercial and juridical rules best.

As Leah, a producer and DJ who has a background in pop music, describes in the following quote, the extent to which there is a focus on money is also reflected in the music-making process:

You need to have a lot of, well, a lot of distinctiveness, and the courage to simply do what you want without catering to the desires of others. And when I write pop songs, I'm really programmed to think about what a hook is, so what you'll remember when you hear it. And maybe that's something you should don't care about at all, so I think the norms and values in the underground are just doing your own thing and not caring about commercialization.

Leah, producer and DJ

The extent of commercialism thus also has an influence on what a genre might sound like and thus on the formal and technical rules (Fabbri, 1982; Frith, 1996). This leads us to the next way in which respondents describe the underground electronic music scene; musically progressive. People are believed to be open-minded towards different sounds and innovation. When commercial success is no longer a concern, there is automatically more room for experimentation and innovation.

Another thing interviewees say about the underground scene is the importance of respect and open-mindedness towards others and the idea that everyone is welcome. Interviewees often mention this in the same breath as the importance of diversity and inclusivity in the underground scene. In the following quote Laura describes how these values are implemented in the underground scene nowadays:

For example, there is now a lot of focus on safer spaces and stricter house rules. And against aggression towards minorities and such. I think that's a very strong aspect that people certainly take into account and that is also safeguarded. And I think that in the more commercial industry, it's not necessarily a given. (...) Indeed, the diversity -which by now is a bit of an overused word- on both the dance floors, in the line-ups, and behind the scenes, is also cherished.

Laura, DJ

In this quote she also endorses the importance of diversity in different aspects of the scene. Especially the diversity of line-ups has become part of measuring whether a line-up is good, it can be considered to be a quality criterion. As discussed earlier, the formation of its own quality criteria is something that happens within the restricted field of production (Bourdieu, 1985). The application of this criterion is clearly demonstrated in the following quote:

Anyways, but so I think in the Netherlands there is definitely like strives for that kind of change, and I think what's nice is that there's a big like it doesn't work if you only have white, male, heterosexual unqueer line up, like, what the fuck are you doing? Or OK, that's the image you want to give. Then I don't need to be in that space you know.

Brooke, DJ

According to Brooke and many other interviewees, underground electronic music as a social force should thus stand for this diversity and inclusivity. This political progressiveness was also visible when gender inequalities were discussed. Multiple interviewees show that they have knowledge about the topic, for example, through the application of terms like ‘token’. This all fits within the social and ideological rules as described by Frith (1996) and Fabbri (1982).

Even though the interviewees’ description of underground electronic music in the Netherlands all sounds very positive and progressive, most interviewees also note that there is still a lot of work to do. Multiple interviewees stress that there is a discrepancy between the values discussed and what is seen in reality, as demonstrated in the following two quotes:

First of all, I feel that there are a lot of norms and values written down that I don’t think are followed. It's always about inclusivity. Everyone must respect each other. But as I just said, it’s really a competitive little world. (...) And people really look down on each other. And I know it comes from insecurity. But it’s all supposed to be very open-minded. But many people are really very close-minded. (...) So how free and open-minded it is supposed to be, that I find very important. But unfortunately, I often find it is not.

Jasmine, DJ

Yes, for example, something like inclusivity is often mentioned. I also think it’s an important value within the scene. At least on paper. (...) It can sometimes become a bit of a promotional thing. But I do think that values are being promoted.

Anna, DJ (produces too)

As these quotes illustrate and as discussed earlier in the theoretical framework, there is a contradiction between the narrative of what underground or niche electronic music should be about, and what is perceived by some of the respondents. This aligns with the paradox Conor et al. (2015) observe in the creative sector as a whole. This paradox leads us to the next section, where the current state of affairs in relation to gender in the niche electronic music scene is discussed based on the respondents' experiences.

4.2 The current state of affairs

Just like the numbers of amongst others female:pressure (2024) already showed, almost all interviewees notice that a shift happened or is still happening when it comes to the position of female artist in the electronic underground scene. Many of them express that before they were not so aware of the gender inequalities, but that there is now more awareness on this topic.

I think things have been going a lot better lately. I remember when I was seventeen, that is ten years ago or so, then I didn't pay attention to that at all. Because all the DJs who were playing at the time were always men. And then there were one or two women, Rebekah and Paula Tempel or so who you saw everywhere. So in my memory it was always very much like that. Oh yes, men are DJs and women are not. But I feel like that has been changing a bit lately. So I have the feeling that things are going into the right direction.

Emily, DJ (produces too)

This interviewee, who primarily saw male DJs as teenagers, thus picked up the notion that men are DJs and women are not. This is an example of social role theory in practice, where gender stereotypes develop from the gender division seen in society (Eagly, 1987). The increase of female artists in line-ups creates more representation, which fights the stereotypical idea that DJ'ing is solely something for men. For some of the interviewees, seeing a woman behind the decks was even a direct reason to try out DJ'ing:

Because I think I was 19 or something, and then I saw KI/KI. (...) And then I was really like, wow, I think that's really sick that a woman is doing this. (...) And me and a friend of mine (...) we were like, okay, fuck it, let's go, you know. We're just going to try this. And then I really enjoyed it.

Anna, DJ (produces too)

The strong effect a role model can have in a male-dominated scene (Berkers, 2012) is illustrated well in this quote. Anna identifies herself with the female DJ, which influences her ideas about what she can accomplish. Multiple interviewees have said something similar. Besides being influenced themselves by women behind the decks, multiple interviewees also notice that other girls see them as a role model, by coming up to them after their set to tell them they were motivated or inspired by them to also try out DJ'ing. Representation thus counters the stereotypical idea that the female gender is just not good at it.

The majority of respondents is quite positive and hopeful about the shift that is said to be taking place within the niche electronic music scene. However, they also note that there is still work to do, especially when looking at the terrain of music production. They have the feeling that there are more female artists active or visible as DJs than as producers. But, they also notice a shift here where more and more women start producing electronic music, even though this is still lagging behind when comparing it to male producers. This is exactly the same as Farrugia (2004) noted 20 years ago; a rapid growth of female DJs, but this growth being absent when looking at producers. In the following quote one of the interviewees, Ashley, expresses how she sees the rise of female music producers:

But things are changing. There are a few bubbling up and that also means that there are many more people behind the door... Because you are not going to shout that from the rooftops from the first day that you produce. So that probably also means that there is a large group of women who are at least involved in it.

Ashley, producer & DJ

Even though many women are not yet displaying it to the outside world, producing has captured their interest. This quote illustrates the hope that many respondents have about the future in which these people 'behind the door' would take a step outside and present themselves to the world. Interviewees also note that labels release few women. Some respondents ask themselves the question whether this is because there are just less female producers or that other (gendered) factors play a role, like male label bosses favoring male friends or insecurities of female producers.

Like mentioned before in my methodology, I asked all interviewees at the end of the interview whether they knew female producers that did not DJ next to producing. In line with existing literature (Farrugia, 2004) interviewees express that DJ'ing and producing hinder each other, because investing time in production means less time for digging music (or the other way around). This makes that you can expect that there are producers who solely focus

on producing music. However, none of the interviewees is able to name a producer that solely focusses on producing music without DJ'ing. This is not just the case for female DJs, but for producers of all genders. There is thus a conspicuous absence of producers who do not DJ next to it. The most likely reason for this absence is a financial one. Almost all interviewed producers express that DJ'ing is necessary in order to financially maintain themselves. After asking one of the respondents whether she had ever considered solely producing without performing live or DJing, she answered with "Yeah, but that's just your business model. So that's just impossible." (Ashley, producer & DJ). This same interviewee expresses that she thinks the compensation for DJs and producers is out of balance, since producers are the ones creating the tracks DJs are playing. Besides, they have to invest a lot of time and money in acquainting equipment and skills. According to her, the fees of DJs are often way higher than those of producers. In the following quote another producer also illustrates the financial necessity of DJ'ing:

I actually always started with the idea that I want to make songs and release them and that I don't necessarily have to play. But that won't sell your songs. I just learned along the way that it has to go together

Leah, producer and DJ

This quote shows that DJ'ing is not only necessary for the higher fees, but that it is also a way of marketing your produced tracks. In the previous quotes DJing was really illustrated as supporting someone's production career, however it thus also seems to work the other way around. Farrugia (2004) already pointed out that DJs who also produce receive higher status and fees, and multiple interviewees share this belief. Some see it as a way of marketing yourself and differentiating yourself from other (female) DJs. For a few of the interviewees it was even an initial motivator to start with producing. In practice however, they do not really experience that releasing music brings them these type of benefits. When asking one of the interviewees about her initial expectations of the effects of releasing of music on her music career, she finished my sentence with "would help more with getting gigs, yeah, definitely, it's hard to not be bitter about it, I've learned to not be as angry about it." (Bianca, producer and DJ). In this case releasing music did thus not impact her music career as hoped. Other interviewees are more positive about the impact of producing on their DJ career and look more at what it contributed to their technical skills as a DJ.

DJing is really a different thing. But I do notice that you do hear things better when you also produce. (...) So I have the feeling that it makes my DJing better, but I don't think you necessarily need it [production] to be a good DJ or anything.

Emily, DJ (produces too)

From this, we can conclude that being active as both a producer and a DJ can really reinforce each other. As a result, it is not surprising that the two often go hand in hand. Thus, we can explain the conspicuous absence of producers who solely produce by two factors: a) financial/marketing reasons and b) the positive effect that the combination of DJing and producing has on technical skills.

4.3 Music career trajectories

During the interviews the career paths of the DJ's and producers were extensively discussed, starting at the beginning with the emergence of their interest in electronic music. From this point they explained how they started with DJ'ing and/or producing, in what kind of environment they this was, with who and how they have experienced this. It became clear that the producer/DJ distinction I made for my sample is not so clear-cut, nor is the direction in which a career develops. All seven interviewed producers are also DJ'ing next to producing. Four of them started with producing and learned how to DJ later, while the other three did it the other way around. In the DJ category it appears that half of them is also busy with producing, even though this is still behind the scenes. Farrugia (2004) already pointed out that it is debated whether there is something like a natural transition from DJ to producer or from producer to DJ. Looking at the career paths of these female artists, there is still no clear answer to this question. This also demonstrates that Clawson's (1999) argument regarding the bass as a means of entering the world of bands cannot be directly applied to DJing as a means of entering the world of niche electronic music.

What is striking, however, is that almost all producers (whether they started with producing or with DJing) already played an instrument before they started with producing. This varies from growing up playing violin to playing in guitar bands. This is something that none of the people who were solely DJ did. And even though there are different directions in which careers developed, there are no clear differences between DJs and producers in experiences when it comes to gender dynamics. The reason for this is probably that all interviewees are active on stage, and most gender dynamics are related to the performing side of their work. The interest of these women in electronic music started mostly when they were

in college in their early twenties. This contradicts with previous literature from amongst others Clawson (1999) and Farrugia and Swiss (2008), where it is believed that this interest starts when they are in their late twenties, which makes that they are often too late to attend formal education about music making. The second part still holds up since most interviewees found out about it while already studying something else. One of the interviewees expresses in the following quote that she did think about it, but that she did not feel like it was an option for her:

I have always been very involved with music. And I doubted for a long time whether I wanted to study it. But in the end I didn't dare to. And I didn't really know either. I actually liked so many things. And I always had the idea that you had to go for one thing, as in one instrument. And... Yeah, how do you say that? Somehow it didn't happen to me that I knew that there were also electronic music courses, for example. So for me it was just like okay, that's not going to be it and I started studying something completely different, because I had to study something.

Yasmin, producer and DJ

Yasmin also addresses that she was not aware of the fact that electronic music studies exist, which is in line with what Hopkins and Berkers (2019) found. Even though this specific interviewee did not do a formal music study, there are three producers who did, but for only one of them this was specifically focused on electronic music. The other two had classical schooling, which only one of them finished. A few of the interviewees follow(ed) production courses or classes to learn the basics of electronic music production.

For many of the artist the introduction to DJ'ing was through their (ex) boyfriend or male friends. Showing that on this level gatekeeping by men does thus not really take place. It is interesting to see that this is in contrast with how most interviewees start with producing music, where the introduction and learning process usually takes place in solitude. After the introduction to DJing the biggest part of the learning process often takes place alone, sometimes with the help of Youtube tutorials or just by doing it. Striking is that it only appears twice that artists learned how to DJ from or together with or from female or non-binary friends, showing that the transfer of knowledge often takes place from men on women.

As mentioned before, half of the women I classified as DJ are also producing music, even though still out of the picture. When I asked them why they did not share it with the outside world, these are the type of answers I received:

Yeah, because I'm not satisfied enough with it yet. I haven't been doing it very long, so I still have quite a steep learning curve, in my opinion, so when I listen to something now that I made two months ago, for example, I think very quickly, oh I would do this differently now, or that should be done differently, or this could be done better. (...) So I don't feel like I'm at the level yet, or I'm not satisfied enough yet, that I think I would now like to share this with a large audience.

Emily, DJ (produces too)

I think there is still a bit of uncertainty. I don't really know. I often wonder when a track is ready for the outside world, and no one really has the answer to that. Often people say, yeah, just play it somewhere and you'll see. But because I don't really have a clear answer to that question, I don't dare to put it out there so firmly to the outside world that, okay, this is mine and I'm a producer and listen to this.

Ava, DJ (produces too)

It thus mostly comes down to still being uncertain about their productions and having the feeling that they are not experienced enough yet to release their productions. The feeling that the other women who were producing behind the scenes have, is very similar to this.

The other half of the DJ group all express that they thought about producing music and even took some initial steps through for example a production course or workshop, but did not continue with it. As illustrated with the following two quotes, most of the time the steep learning curve seems to hold them back:

Yes, I've thought about it. But it's actually kind of the same as why I waited so long with DJing. Because when I see Ableton I think, there are a lot of faders and things and so on. (..) And I think that it takes quite a lot of energy and time to start, so to speak.

Laura, DJ

But the thing is I have, yeah, deep frustration with, like, fiddling around with shit. So I think I have quite a lot of ideas. It's just I have a really big disconnection with how to make those ideas realities and then I really lose motivation quite quickly so yeah, that's why and I have that with a lot of technology in general, like I just lose the fidgeting around about it. I just really find that frustrating.

Brooke, DJ

The overload of technical options that can be figured out through ‘fidgeting’ or ‘fiddling’ around is thus experienced as overwhelming. It can be argued that women experience a steeper learning curve than men, since men are used to being exposed to technology. For women, it is therefore more difficult to start with something technical, like electronic music production, as they might be afraid to confirm the existing stereotype that technology is not something for women. This anxiety due to a steep learning curve can also be connected to Csíkszentmihályi’s (1975/2000) flow theory. This theory presumes that to come into a state of flow, a certain activity needs to stretch the existing skills (neither asking too much nor asking too little) of the person performing the activity. When someone is in this state of flow, they will become very focused on the activity, lose track of time, and lose reflective self-consciousness. Instead of having to achieve an end goal to reach satisfaction, the experience of doing the activity will become intrinsically rewarding (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2014). Striking is that this steep learning curve and playing around with the technology is something that the DJs experience as frustrating, while for the producers, this is the part of producing electronic music that they really enjoy and lose themselves in. These producers thus reach the state of flow; the act of fiddling around becomes intrinsically rewarding for them. Multiple producers express that they lose track of time sometimes and that they can easily lock themselves in for hours to test out a new piece of gear. The state of flow is, however, a really fragile balance. Challenges should not exceed skills too much, or someone might become anxious. However, it should also not be too easy; otherwise, it will become boring (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2014). Producing music is never seen as too easy or boring by respondents who do not reach the flow state; it is always too challenging, resulting in respondents becoming anxious due to the overload of technological options.

4.4 Gender dynamics

When discussing the music careers of these DJs and producers, many struggles came to light. This varies from despair about finances, insecurities, fear of failure, and perfectionism to jealousy. These are all things that occur across the entire scope of the cultural sector; therefore, it is not remarkable that they also occur in the field of niche electronic music. These experiences are also not necessarily gendered, since they can also be experienced by men working in this field. However, there were also plenty of struggles discussed that are clearly gendered, like sexist remarks and the technical underestimation of women. Based on previous literature (e.g. Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Hopkins & Berkers, 2019; Farrugia, 2004) these things are all, unfortunately, not that surprising.

Sometimes sexist remarks are very clearly sexist, like this encounter with a boy Anna (DJ, produces too) describes: “And then just say really derogatory shit. (...) I've also heard that I couldn't DJ, but that I had a good tits or something. You know, that kind of shit. And I found that quite painful at the time.” It is very clear from this quote that she is being sexualized because of her appearance under a male gaze (Berkers & Schaap, 2018). However, it also happens, maybe even more often, that sexist situations are not clearly misogynistic but can be read between the lines. Think, for example, of situations where women are technically underestimated and men give their unwanted advice. This type of behavior is commonly referred to as 'mansplaining'. The term has gained popularity over the last 10-15 years when pointing out subtle sexist behaviors (Joyce et al., 2021). There is no consensus about the definition of 'mansplaining' behavior, but many definitions emphasize that it typically involves a man explaining something to a woman in a patronizing or condescending manner (Joyce et. al, 2021). Women's technical underestimation is rooted in existing stereotypes. In her work on the ideal-typical artist, based on Acker's (1990) ideal-typical worker, Miller (2016) explains that female artists constantly face a gender bias when their work is being evaluated. As tokens, they are first seen as women and only then as artists. They are evaluated more critically than men (Hopkins & Berkers, 2019). Following existing gender roles, women are not expected to be proficient at DJing, producing music, or technology in general. The following quote from Jasmine illustrates how mansplaining can happen in between the lines:

I didn't realize what happened until afterwards. And he started talking about... Yeah, he started analyzing my entire DJ set. 'I've been watching from a distance,' he said, 'You've made progress. You've gotten a lot better. You may have to slow down a bit every now and then, because then you want it too much. Think a little more about your mixes. Because you just go off beat.' All the way home. And I'm sitting there, but I was very tired, so you're just sitting there talking with it and you get out of that car and you think, 'what just happened?'

Jasmine, DJ

Even Jasmine did not notice in the moment what was actually happening. However, afterwards she realized that she was being treated in a very condescending manner, like she had no knowledge on this topic, even though she just DJed and thus showed that she has the right knowledge. Interviewees' descriptions of situations in which they feel like a man was mansplaining them often revolve around technology. Not surprising, since culturally women are not expected to know how to use technology (Farrugia, 2004).

For example, I once had a situation where the wheel of the CDJ was broken, like I think some beer was spilled into it. It was really sticky and just wouldn't turn anymore. So it kept getting jammed all the time. And I had to mention it like four times. Because the first three times, I kept getting explanations on how such a thing works while I was already using it. (...) I'm not sure if it's differs whether you are a female DJ or not. But I do often feel that on average, there's a bit more explaining of how things work. Or some sort of unnecessary information is given at the moment you're already there to perform. Then someone should also expect that you know what you're doing.

Yasmin, producer and DJ

In this quote Yasmin explains that she has the idea that she is treated differently than male DJs, when it comes to situations in which technology is involved. In the first three instances she was not taken seriously and she even received explanation about technology which, as a DJ who was booked there, can be expected to know. This underestimation of technological knowledge and the explanation that followed puts the male explainer in a superior position and Yasmin in an inferior one, emphasizing the patriarchal organization of gender (Joyce et al., 2021). Many respondents sketch similar situations in which they have the feeling that they are being mansplained or fear it, without actually receiving an explanation, so to say imagined mansplaining, like in this example:

Coincidentally, there were quite a few people, mainly men, standing at the front and then actually hanging over that booth. And I really felt like they were really watching what I was doing. But it's probably more out of interest, like 'wow, is here being played with vinyl?' (...) I think they're more... just looking at what you are touching? But I interpret that as keeping an eye on me.

Marissa, producer and DJ

Marissa tells in this quote that she knows deep down that they do not always have bad intentions, however it still works on her nerves. Other interviewees also express that they do not feel comfortable when men are watching what they are doing from close by. It makes them feel insecure, like they are being judged and waiting for them to make a mistake so that a mansplaining comment can be made. This fear might come from previous experiences interviewees had with mansplaining, however it might also come from internalization of the stereotypical idea that men are more knowledgeable about technology (Farrugia, 2004; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2016).

4.5 The consequences of 'inclusive' booking practices

The interviews confirm what was already found by Koren (2021) and Gadir (2016); programmers and promoters of niche electronic music nowadays implement a programming strategy that focuses on diversity. Every interviewee notes that being female actually benefits their career. This is a similar narrative as identified by Scharff (2022) in her research on classical musicians. She calls this the 'progress discourse', people using this discourse emphasize that gender relations have already changed or are changing, leaving women as the advantaged gender. As a woman in a scene dominated by men, they stand out; "(...) because you are the exception just a little faster. It's just a bit more hip to be booked." (Anna, DJ, produces too). As a female artist, you are thus more likely to be noticed and booked. Some describe that they experience that besides being female, having a non-western background or being queer are also factors that make you stand out more; "They think, well, we have someone who's partially Asian, we can check that box. And a woman." (Leah, producer and DJ). This quote demonstrates that creating a diverse line-up or implementing an inclusive booking strategy goes beyond gender. To create a diverse line-up, there should be people with different backgrounds involved. The interviewees are all very positive about the trend that causes line-ups to become more and more diverse. However, besides a positive feeling about this development and the benefits they are able to reap from it, they also feel quite conflicted about it.

I feel like when it comes to being booked because you're female DJ, there are certain ways that it can be quite positive and empowering, but there are certain ways where it really becomes glaring and then it becomes shitty because you're like, fuck am I just not that good at DJing or was I only booked as a token, you know?

Brooke, DJ

Similar to interviewees of Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) multiple interviewees speak about tokenism. Being a token makes someone highly visible, but also makes it more difficult to be recognized for her skills (Berkers & Schaap, 2018). This conflictedness does not limit itself to being booked to play somewhere, it is also present at the producer side of the electronic music scene as is demonstrated in the following quote:

So at the very beginning, I was already asked when I started DJing, do you also produce? (...) Then I often immediately received the comment 'Oh yes, could you let us know when you start producing? Because we think the sound you play is very nice, so we probably also like the sound you produce.' So before I actually started producing, I had about four

or five labels that were interested in releasing something of mine, even though I had never made anything before. I thought, yes, I feel flattered (...) But I thought that was very strange. I thought, is the bar that low? Or yeah, how does this even work? Or are you actually just asking me because I see on your label that you have released mainly from men?

Kiara, DJ (produces too)

It seems from this quote as if the barrier to release your music on a label as a female producer seems to be very low nowadays. When labels reach out to women of whom they have never heard any productions, it might suggest that these labels are very desperately looking for female artists to release on their label. A reason for this might be that it can contribute to their label being more diverse. It is also this point that makes female artists doubt the intentions of a certain label, but also about themselves. Progressive booking strategies do thus not only have a positive impact (more space for women), but also a negative one. Berkers and Schaap (2018) have described this as the ‘double-edged sword’ in their research on gender and metal production. With the double-edged sword they describe an unintentional paradox where on one side standing out as a female artist helps to attract attention in an industry that is dominated by men. But on the other side, those female artists may start questioning the nature of the attention or recognition they receive; is it due to their musical talent or simply because of their gender? This questioning comes back in the previous quotes by Kiara and Brooke, but it does not limit itself to their experiences. It comes back in every interview and is often described as “contributing even more to your kind of imposter syndrome, so to speak” (Charlotte, DJ). Imposter syndrome is a mechanism that was introduced in academic literature in 1978. It occurs when someone feels like they are a fraud, fear discovery and are struggling with accepting their personal successes. Initially it was believed that this internalized doubt was something that only impacted females and high-achieving people, however over the years it became evident that it is something that can impact anyone (Heslop et al., 2023). The personality traits that help individuals become successful can also make them more prone to negative outcomes like imposter syndrome. It is therefore not surprising that imposter syndrome is more common among high-performers and perfectionists, for example in the academic and medical field (Heslop et al., 2023). We can also perceive it when looking at the cultural field, where artist and creatives deal with the feeling of perfectionism and imposter syndrome. Many of the electronic music artists in this research express that their perfectionism in regards to their production or DJ work works against themselves sometimes:

“it's mainly always my own perfectionism that gets in the way. When do I find something good enough? Do I feel good enough about myself?” (Paige, producer and DJ). Interviewees express that imposter syndrome kicks in when they think they are being booked because of the job they have, for example because they are the booker of an important club or festival as well. But in the majority of the cases their feelings of imposter syndrome are clearly related to their gender. The trend that many people in the industry are currently trying to book more inclusive in order to get a more diverse programming or discography seems to be a catalyst of this mechanism. The fact that all interviewees feel this in some sort of way really illustrates how big of an impact this has. This quote of Mia illustrates what type of insecurities and questions pop up in someone's head when possibly being booked because of your gender:

I do think it [*being a woman*] plays a role. But I then think is it really fair? Am I really good? Do you really want me to come play because you think I'm really cool or because you need a woman DJ on the line-up? I don't know. That's in the back of my mind, yes.

Mia, producer and DJ

Next to imposter syndrome another important self-sabotaging mechanism that can be identified from the interviews is that of the stereotype threat. This is when individuals experience stress or anxiety because they are afraid of confirming negative stereotypes about the social group to which they belong (Beasley & Fischer, 2012), in this case being women. For the interviewees, this fear comes with the urge to prove themselves: "I often felt like I had to prove myself more. That you really had to show; yeah, but women can do this too. And that's just not really a nice feeling or so that you have to, because men never have to do that." (Marissa, producer and DJ) This quote illustrates the urge to prove oneself based on the stereotype that women are not good at producing or DJing electronic music. Since women's competence is more strictly judged than that of men (Berkers & Schaap, 2018), it is not surprising that women have the feeling they have to prove themselves more. According to Young (2023) people who face imposter syndrome employ different coping mechanisms, such as holding back or flying under the radar, over-preparing or over-working, procrastination, and the use of charm. In my research some of these coping mechanisms listed by Young (2023) seemed to be implied when dealing with stereotype threat. The most common ways for producers to cope with this are compensatory behavior (over-working), doing things in secret and not asking for help (similar to holding back or flying under the radar).

Compensatory behavior manifests itself in not doing it the 'easy way'. Instead of DJing with digital music files on a USB, female DJs decide to DJ with vinyl. And instead of producing with software, female producers decide to produce their music fully analogue with hardware like synths and drum computers.

And so the way that I do it is, yeah, to try and prove myself. I go above and beyond. By doing everything analogue as well, I'm going above and beyond what I actually need to do. And I think that's why.

Bianca, producer and DJ

This quote illustrates that she is aware of it being a coping mechanism and that she does not have to produce analogue. This compensatory behavior can also be seen when looking at female producers doing live-sets:

I think I really had to overcompensate. The reason I do live sets with hardware is also just to show it. Sorry, but someone who has no understanding of it just can't do this. So there's just no way around it that I'm capable doing this. And that's why I do it like this. Then there's no doubt anymore that there's some kind of genius dude behind me.

Ashley, producer and DJ

Again, this producer is aware of the fact that she is working harder than needed in order to prove herself and showing to others that contrary to the existing stereotype she, a woman, can do this.

Another coping strategy which is clearly noticeable in the interviews is that of doing things in secret. Multiple producers express to rather not share their music before it is finished, the most striking example is that one of the interviewees learned the basics of producing without her boyfriend, who also produces, knowing about it:

I first tried to figure it all out in secret. And when I finally had something about which I thought it sounds like something, then I let it listen once or twice. And... Well, he [boyfriend] really enjoyed it, of course.

Yasmin, producer and DJ

As she expected, her boyfriend reacts positively once she shows and tells him; however, there still seems to be this urge to prove and go against the stereotype that women are less technically inclined. She explains later in the interview that she does not want to be relying on him or men in general. This urge to be independent is a sentiment that also comes back in

other interviews: “I also really wanted to be independent of him [ex-boyfriend]. Or of anyone, actually. I actually didn't want to be dependent on men.” (Ashley, producer and DJ). The fact that people nowadays have the option to decide to learn this on their own is an outcome of the democratization of technology (Chambers, 2021). Think for example about all the information that can be found online, the need to learn face to face from peers has disappeared. As is the necessity to visit music stores, a synthesizer, drum computer or DJ mixer can easily be ordered online without having to go to a specialized music store. The ‘room of one’s own’ outside of the competitive, male-dominated industry, considered essential for female artists as described by Barna (2022), is thus created by this digitalization. Here, women can learn, create, and exchange outside of established patriarchal spaces.

Taking this route can also be related back to over-working, or not taking the easy route. The following two quotes demonstrate the downside of figuring out everything on your own without asking for help; you progress more slowly.

Well, maybe it's only now that I realize how much I've missed that. (...) But I do think that my progress took a long time. I had to figure everything out myself, so to speak. And I always had... I've always had plenty of friends, but I always really missed having friends with whom I could really connect about it. Yeah. In the end, I think that now that I have that a bit more, you progress much faster, because you help each other, you point out things to each other and you can exchange things and so on.

Ashley, producer and DJ

I sometimes notice, oh yeah, a lot of those guys, for example my colleagues, (...) they are exchanging a lot about how something works or why that one record fits well with the other one. And I think I haven't really had many of those kind of interactions. Because I just taught myself quite a lot. And I think that you also miss out on a bit of knowledge and perhaps confidence as a result. Because you don't necessarily... yeah, you have no knowledge. You kind of figured it out yourself. So you know, you can't measure it as well or something like that. And I still find that difficult.

Charlotte, DJ

Female electronic artists thus withhold themselves from engaging in these knowledge exchanges because they are afraid to say something that the other perceives as wrong, again afraid to confirm the stereotype that women are not technically inclined. When specifying what they could say wrong interviewees regularly refer to not being familiar with technical

jargon. This relates back to the role of interaction and language in doing gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and Sargent's (2009) idea of technicalized talk that excludes women from conversations. Even though many of them simultaneously express the added value of exchanging knowledge, this still withholds them from engaging in conversations with men about music and technology. It also holds them back from working together with other artists on productions: "It's more just, you think, oh, maybe I'm not good at it, this person's better than me. Maybe I'm not good enough to collaborate with them, even though they've asked me." (Bianca, producer and DJ). Again, this fear of working together is a shared fear of multiple interviewees. Important to note here, is that insecurities about skills and fear of affirming stereotypes seem to be present to a lesser extent when working together with other female producers. Probably because in this scenario they are working with people who have to deal with the same stereotypes. Therefore several producers indicate that they are searching actively for female producers to work with.

I just have the feeling that when you talk about things, it feels a bit more equal (...) I often have the feeling that someone else always knows something better when I talk to someone about music who is not a female producer, for example.

Yasmin, producer and DJ

This quote illustrates that working with other female artists makes her feel more comfortable. It might also show that the stereotype of women being less technically inclined might be internalized, since this interviewee assumes that male producers know it better, while she does not assume this from female producers.

As is the case for mansplaining behavior, the intensified feelings of imposter syndrome and stereotype threat relate back to Miller's (2016) second point; the gender bias in aesthetic evaluation. Female artists are subjected to a more critical assessment and have to work harder for recognition than men. Besides, it relates back to social role theory (Eagly, 1987). Women are evaluated more critically and are not expected to hold the role of the technologically knowledgeable DJ/producer. This impacts their self-esteem and increases the pressure they feel to deliver.

5. Conclusion

Before starting with this research, my active engagement in the niche electronic music scene brought my attention to a shift. A growing number of women are DJing, and calls for inclusivity, for example expressed through inclusivity riders, are gaining traction. Despite these developments, I did not see the same shift when looking at the production side of electronic music. Therefore, I wondered whether there might be something holding women back from taking up electronic music production. This reflection ultimately led to the formulation of my research question: ‘To what extent do female DJs and producers in the Dutch niche electronic music scene experience negative gender dynamics in their step towards music producing?’. In order to answer this central question I formulated three sub questions, being 1) How do the careers of female niche electronic music DJs and producers develop? 2) What are factors that hold female niche electronic music DJs and producers back from producing? and 3) How does their career path relate to the gender imbalances existing in the electronic music scene?

This study has tried to answer these questions by drawing on existing academic works within the theoretical framework, but especially through conducting 15 semi-structured interviews with female DJs and producers active in the Dutch electronic underground scene, the findings of which were presented in the previous chapter.

In the theory, I first explain how mainstream EDM can be classified as an industry-based genre and niche or underground electronic dance music as a scene-based genre. I did this with the help of works by Lena & Peterson (2008), Fabbri (1982) and Frith (1996). Next, I explain the paradox of the cultural and creative industries that are believed to be diverse and inclusive, while simultaneously facing gender inequalities (Conor et al., 2015). This paradox extends to the underground electronic music scene. Gender stereotypes and the ideal-typical artist that is formed around a masculine subject (Miller, 2016), often result in women's competence being judged more strictly when comparing it to men's (Berkers & Schaap, 2018), which plays a substantial role in gender imbalances in the creative field. Scholars note that when specifically looking at the (electronic) music scene there are four main obstacles that women face, being 1) gendered technology, 2) the inaccessibility of social networks, 3) time and money investments and 4) the absence of female role models (Farrugia, 2004; Berkers & Schaap, 2018).

Moving on to the results I show what values underground electronic music artists assign to the underground scene in which they operate. These values can be characterized as

not so money-driven, musically progressive, open-minded, diverse and inclusive. At the same time artists acknowledge that these values are not always seen in practice. They highlight the same paradox as described by Conor et al. (2015) regarding the cultural field as a whole: it is renowned for its openness and diversity, yet simultaneously marked by significant inequalities. When respondents reflect on numerical inequalities they notice that especially the position of female music producers falls behind. And even though they see that the position of female DJs is improving, it is still a male-dominated field. However, when looking at the gender dynamics artists experience, it is revealed that there is no clear difference between DJs and producers; they deal with the same struggles since they are all performing artists.

Regarding the first sub question, I have found that there is no set way in which careers of female DJs and producers in the niche electronic music scene develop. Some move from producing into DJing, while others do it the other way around or never really start with producing music. Notably, the introduction to DJ'ing often takes place through male (boy)friends, while the exploration of producing music often takes place independently. It is remarkable that half of the interviewees I initially grouped as DJ, were also active as producers, even though still behind the scenes.

In response to the second sub question, it can be observed that insecurities and feelings of inexperience are the main factors preventing them from sharing their creations with the outside world. For the DJs that have tried producing but did not continue with it, it was usually the steep learning curve that does not bring them in a state of flow (Nakamura & Csíkszentmihályi, 2014) and thus holds them back from continuing. However, negative gender dynamics based on gender roles, such as stereotypes about women's technical competence and the lack of role models, are also likely to play a substantial role in this. All these factors contribute to how gender imbalances influence the career paths of female artists, addressing the third sub question.

Something else that is of importance to the third sub-question is the programming strategy focused on inclusivity and diversity, which is implied by programmers and promoters of niche electronic music. This relates to the career paths of female artists, as women are a minority in this field and therefore more easily noticed, which impacts their opportunities. Even though the interviewees are very positive about the fact that more and more women are present on line-ups due to this booking strategy, it also brings up a feeling of confliction, which is one of the most relevant findings of this study. It makes them question whether they are booked because of their skills or because of their gender and leaves them with intensified feelings of

imposter syndrome and stereotype threat, which in turn results in overdoing things or not asking for help. This unintentional paradox, is what Berkers & Schaap (2018) already described as the double-edged sword.

To conclude, I want to highlight the two most relevant findings to the central question. The first one being that many negative gender dynamics experienced by the artists relate back to the technical underestimation of women that is rooted in existing stereotypes. The fear of confirming these existing stereotypes in combination with the steep learning curve can be observed as the main obstacles towards producing. Secondly I want to highlight that female artists experience both negative and positive gender dynamics, which leads us to the double-edged sword effect. Due to booking strategies focused on diversity female artists stand out more easily, however they also question the nature of attention which leads to intensify their feelings of imposter syndrome and stereotype threat.

It is also this last point that is especially interesting and important to understand for the (electronic) music sector. By shedding light on the societal implications of inclusive booking strategies within the niche electronic music scene, this research reveals a double-edged sword effect. While the implementation of these strategies represents a step towards diversity and inclusion, it also causes previously overlooked dynamics. Additionally, this thesis highlights that female artists in the underground electronic music scene still experience gender inequalities, even though this scene is known for its progressiveness and openness. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in the step towards more diversity and inclusion, not only in the context of the underground electronic music scene, but also outside of it. This thesis thus offers relevant insights for (electronic) music industry professionals, policy makers in the creative field and gender scholars working on music and the creative field.

Inclusive booking strategies do not only affect women, they also have consequences for men operating in the niche electronic music scene. Multiple respondents already noted that they thought it was more difficult nowadays for their male friends to secure gigs, than for women. A limitation of this study is therefore that it only focuses on the experiences of female artists. I initially made the decision to focus on women and make a differentiation between producers and DJs. Moreover, the inclusion of men would potentially result in narrow categories, overly emphasizing individual experiences. However, afterwards I concluded that there are no significant differences between the career paths and experiences of female DJs and producers. Therefore a recommendation for future studies would be to look at the consequences of inclusive booking strategies on male artists. Besides, the study did not take an intersectional approach. For some respondents their queerness or cultural background

added another layer to the imposter syndrome and stereotype threat. They had the feeling that they were sometimes being booked in order to tick these boxes as well. Even though I shortly touched upon this, their experiences in regards to intersectionality were insufficiently discussed during the interviews. Therefore a recommendation for future research would be to also research the consequences of inclusive booking practices on people of color and queer people.

The fact that half of the DJs are already active as producers behind the scenes makes me hopeful for the future, since it can be expected that these and other secret producers will step out of the shadows in the upcoming years. Therefore I want to conclude with the same optimism as Farrugia (2004) did twenty years ago, a prediction and hope for the future: that as more women step into production, others will follow, leading us to a point where inclusive booking strategies are no longer needed, as diversity and representation have become inherent and the norm in the industry.

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CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH (EN)

For questions about the study please contact: Kris Fraanje, 520610kf@eur.nl

Description

You are invited to participate in a research about electronic music producers. The purpose of the study is to understand whether people in the Dutch underground electronic music scene experience gender dynamics in their step towards music producing. Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms, my questions will be related to your experiences as a DJ and/or music producer.

An audio recording will be made of the interview. The recording will not be shared with others and it will be anonymously transcribed. I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

Risks and benefits

- A. As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. I will not use your name or other identifying information in the study. Participants in the study will only be referred to with pseudonyms, and in terms of general characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity and occupation.
- B. I am aware that the possibility of identifying the people who participate in this study may involve risks for the participant's reputation. For that reason I will not keep any information that may lead to the identification of those involved in the study. I will only use pseudonyms to identify participants.

Time involvement

Your participation in this study will approximately take 60 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

Compensation

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

Participant's rights

If you have decided to accept participation in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

Contacts and questions

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish– dr. Julian Schaap, j.schaap@eshcc.eur.nl (supervisor of the executor of this master thesis).

Signing the consent form

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be recorded during this study:

Name

Signature

Date

Appendix B. Interview Guide DJs

Personal experience DJing

- Could you tell me how your interest in electronic music started?
- Could you tell me about how you started with DJing?
 - Were there things holding you back in this process?
 - Were there things encouraging you in this process?
- When you started DJing, did you have people around you doing the same?
 - And how is this now?
 - Do you also engage in DJing or music sharing with others?
- In what kind of environment did you start DJing? (bedroom/friends place/studio/etc.)
 - And how is this now?
- Have you encountered any obstacles in your journey to where you are now and what were those obstacles?
- What do you like about being a DJ?
 - Are there things you dislike about it?
- What skills do you think make a good DJ?
- Who are DJs you (have) look(ed) up to and what do you admire about them?

Experiences producing

- Did you ever think about or try producing music?
 - When was this?
 - In what kind of environment was this?
 - What attracted you to this?
 - What held you back in continuing this or showing it to a bigger audience?
 - Did you ask other for help with this?
- Do you have many people in your environment who are concerned with music production?
- Are there things you like better about being a DJ when you hold it next to producing music?
 - And the other way around?
- What are skills you think make a good producer?
- Who are producers you (have) look(ed) up to and what do you admire about them?

Personal experiences general

- Do you think you are good at what you are doing?
 - Why?
- Do you regularly compare yourself with other artists?
 - With who? Examples
- Are you actively concerned with how you come across as an artist?
- What values do you think are important for the electronic underground/niche scene?
- To what extent can you make a living from your music, or do you also earn income in another way?

Gender and production

- How would you describe the current underground electronic music landscape in the Netherlands when it comes to DJs in relation to gender?
 - Do you have the idea that this has changed? How?
- How would you describe the current underground electronic music production landscape in the Netherlands in relation to gender?
 - Do you have the idea that this has changed? How?
- Do you ever express your feelings about this with others?
 - Do you have the idea there is a place for you to speak up about this?
- To what extent do you think your gender influences your experience as a DJ?
- Do you have the idea that your gender identity ever disadvantaged your career as a DJ?
 - And do you have the idea that it ever benefited your career?

Ending the interview

- Are there any other things you would like to share that we didn't discuss yet?

General information

- Age
- Gender
- Cultural background
- Occupation

Snowball Sampling

- Do you know other producers and/or DJs that might be interesting to interview for this research?
- Do you specifically know female or non-binary producers that do not DJ next to it?

Appendix C. Interview Guide producers

Personal experiences producing

- Could you tell me how your interest in electronic music started?
- Could you tell me about how you started with music production?
 - Were there things holding you back in this process?
 - Were there things encouraging you in this process?
- When you started with producing music, did you have people around you doing the same?
 - And how is this now?
 - Do you also make music with others?
 - With who? How are the dynamics?
 - To what extent do you and others also share demos with each other for feedback?
 - Have others ever asked you for help regarding music production?
- In what kind of environment did you start producing music? (bedroom/friends place/studio/etc.)
 - And how is this now?
- Have you encountered any obstacles in your journey to where you are now as a producer and what were those obstacles?
- What do you like about being an electronic music producer?
 - Are there things you dislike about it?
- What are skills you think make a good producer?

Personal experiences DJing

- Are you also active as a DJ and/or live performer?
 - If active, what do you like about it?
 - Are there things you dislike about it?
 - If not active, why are you not active as a DJ and/or live performer?
- Could you tell me about how you started with DJing? Did you start with DJing first or producing?
 - Were there things holding you back in this process?
 - Were there things encouraging you in this process?
- When you started DJing, did you have people around you doing the same?
 - And how is this now?

- Do you also engage in DJing or music sharing with others?
 - With who? How are the dynamics?
- In what kind of environment did you start DJing? (bedroom/friends place/studio/etc.)
 - And how is this now?
- Have you encountered any obstacles in your journey to where you are now as a DJ and what were those obstacles?
- Are there things you like better about being a producer when you hold it next to DJing?
 - And when you turn it around?
- What are skills you think make a good DJ?

Personal experiences general

- Do you think you are good at what you are doing?
 - Why?
- Who are producers you (have) look(ed) up to and what do you admire about them?
 - And DJs?
- Do you regularly compare yourself with other producers?
 - And with other DJs?
 - With who, examples?
- Are you actively concerned with how you come across as an artist?
- What values do you think are important for the electronic underground/niche scene?
- To what extent can you make a living from your music, or do you also earn income in another way?

Gender and production

- How would you describe the current underground electronic music landscape in the Netherlands when it comes to DJs in relation to gender?
 - Do you have the idea that this has changed? How?
- How would you describe the current underground electronic music production landscape in the Netherlands in relation to gender?
 - Do you have the idea that this has changed? How?
- Do you ever express your feelings about this with others?
 - Do you have the idea there is a place for you to speak up about this?
- To what extent do you think your gender influences your experience as a producer?

- And as a DJ?
- Do you have the idea that your gender identity ever disadvantaged your career as a producer?
 - And do you have the idea that it ever benefited your career?
 - And as a DJ?

Ending the interview

- Are there any other things you would like to share that we didn't discuss yet?

General information

- Age
- Gender
- Cultural background
- Occupation

Snowball Sampling

- Do you know other producers and/or DJs that might be interesting to interview for this research?
- Do you specifically know female or non-binary producers that do not DJ next to it?

Appendix D. Code list

Administrative obstacle	Comparing with women
Afraid of reinforcing stereotypes	Compensatory behavior live sets
Afraid to ask for help	Compensatory behavior to keep up with men
Already played an instrument	Considers themselves good
Appearance as self-expression	Considers themselves good, but...
Appearance dependent on mood	Critique other artists
Appearance more important for female artists	Desperate about career
Barrier at the beginning of production career	Didn't expect to be able to do it
Being a woman has no disadvantages	Difficult to combine with children
Being quickly picked up as a woman	Difficulty receiving feedback
Booked because of	DJing and producing clash
Booked because of being a woman	DJs overrated, producers underrated
Booked because of job-network	Does have like-minded individuals
Booking practices	Does not experience rivalry/competition
Characteristics of a good DJ	Doesn't themselves convincingly good
Characteristics of a good producer	Don't know any producers who don't DJ
Characteristics of underground	Early stage of DJing
Collaboration with men	Early stage of interest in electronic music
Collaboration with women	Early stage of producing
Comments from men	Enjoyable aspect of DJing: connection
Comparing because social media	Enjoyable aspect of DJing: curation
Comparing gigs-jealousy	Enjoyable aspect of DJing: digging music

Enjoyable aspect of DJing: interaction public	Higher standards for productions due to DJ fame
Enjoyable aspect of DJing: traveling	Importance of networking
Enjoyable aspect of production general	Importance of social media
Enjoyable aspect of production: creating	Imposter syndrome
Enjoyable aspect of production: personal	Imposter syndrome because of 'inclusive' bookings
Enjoyable aspects of DJing general	Inclusive booking is discussable
Exchange of feedback	Inclusivity as a marketing tool
Excluded by boys	Independent production
Fear of addressing problems	Influence of women behind the scenes
Fear of collaboration	Insecure about career
Fear of failure	Insecure about skills
Fear of sharing music	Insecure because others watching
Feeling comfortable with appearance	Inspiration through comparing with others
Few female producers	Interest from labels in female artists
Fewer gigs for white men	Intrinsic motivation DJing
Financial obstacle to DJing	Intrinsic motivation producing
Financial obstacle to learning production	Introduction to DJing by male partner/friend
Financial struggle	Introduction to production by partner/friend
Finds themselves good based on progress	Jealousy from others
Formal music education	Labels release few women
Frustration learning process DJing	Learned in secret
Frustration learning process production	Learning process inclusive booking
Gendered experiences influence music	
Health obstacle producing	

Learning process production fun	No aspiration to release music
Learning production through the internet	No enjoyment in experimenting with learning production
Learning to DJ alone	No/few female like-minded DJ peers
Learning to DJ with others	No/few female like-minded producer peers
Learning to produce alone	No/few obstacles production
Less comparing with others	No/few representation
Less experimentation, afraid of mistakes	Not a fan of being in the spotlight
Less insecure than before	Not being able to connect with friends about producing
Live set/production is vulnerable	Not being believed about productions
Live/DJ financially necessary	Not being taken seriously
Male-female dynamics in collaborations	Not discussable outside of bubble
Men book other men more quickly	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live general
Men start producing earlier	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: expectations
Men watching	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: loneliness
Money less important in underground	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: nerves
More male peers	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: safety nightlife
More women DJ than producer	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: travelling
Motivation from being underestimated	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: work
Motivation from comparing with others	Not enjoyable aspect of DJing/live: working hours
Motivation from recognition	
Music more important than appearance	
Need for like-minded individuals	
Negative self-image from comparing with others	
Negotiating difficult	

Not enjoyable production: not knowing when track is finished

Not enjoyable production: technical part

Not using tutorials

Objectification

Obstacle access to equipment

Obstacle of the right network

Perfectionism

Personal development independent of partner

Position women better than before

Positive effect representation

Power dynamic between booker/artist

Prefers learning from other women

Prefers not to produce together

Prefers to work in secret until finished

Pressure social media

Pressure to perform

Producers

Producers less inclined to share knowledge than DJs

Producers less visible than DJs

Produces behind the scenes

Production complements DJ career

Production has a steeper learning curve than DJing

Production is time-consuming

Pros/cons of collective

Putting in a bit more effort into appearance

Received production lessons

Reduced to being a woman

Rise of more female producers

Seeking out men who could teach DJing

Self-confidence from experience

Self-confidence from others

Self-critical

Sharing knowledge

Shift occurring/happened

Short introduction producing

Short introductory DJ lesson

Skeptical about inclusive bookings

Snel opgepikt worden als vrouw

Social media exhausting

Space to speak out

Started with DJing, then producing

Started with producing, then DJing

Stereotype

Stereotype: Men are DJs, women are not

Stereotype: Technology is for men

Still sees production as a hobby

Struggling to continue producing alone

Tactically thinking about career

Talking about problems female artist

Technically underestimated

Thinks they have good musical taste

Time obstacle DJing

Time obstacle learning production

Trying to be myself

Underground progressive

Urge to prove oneself

Using tutorials

Wanting to be independent of men

Wants to first be completely satisfied with productions

Women are judged differently

Women are more hesitant to share music

Women do support each other

Women earn less

Women gravitate towards each other

Women should help each other more, criticize less

Working alone led to slow progress